

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**STRATEGIC TO OPERATIONAL:
A STEP TOO FAR FOR THE NAVY RESERVE**

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ABSTRACT

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This strategy research paper sounds a warning: The state of the Navy Reserve force today poses a very real risk to our national security. The U.S. Navy Reserve has gone through numerous transformations since its founding in 1916. The latest strategy calls for creation of an “operational Reserve.” Critics say that previous similar strategies have been unsuccessful. This paper describes past and current situations in the Navy Reserve, reviews some fundamentals, and then assesses the current strategy by applying a Feasibility, Acceptability, Suitability (FAS) test. It concludes with recommendations for changes or a redirection of future transformation efforts.

STRATEGIC TO OPERATIONAL: A STEP TOO FAR FOR THE NAVY RESERVE

How we manage our Reserve Components will determine how well we as a nation are prepared to fight, today and tomorrow.

—Paul Wolfowitz

For 91 years (some may claim for 231 years) the citizen-sailors of the Naval Reserve have proudly and successfully answered the call to duty whenever it was sounded. They have provided a strategic reserve, like a grand insurance policy that pays out operational dividends in times of emergency, crisis, or war. However, since the 1990s this strategy has undergone some evolutionary changes in an attempt to transform the Navy Reserve (renamed as of 29 April 2005) so it will pay out operational dividends—all the time. Many are now referring to this as an "operational Reserve." That term—for the Navy—describes the gradual move toward the necessity for the Reserve force to play an increasingly active role in the day-to-day planning and operational requirements of the active Navy. Some claim this transformation is inevitable, given the security environment. Admiral Mullen aptly describes this environment:

Perhaps no other challenge is as daunting right now for the Navy as that of defining future force structure, and then building to it. The calculus of force sizing includes the varied and sometimes competing requirements of homeland defense; the Global War on Terror; major combat operations; theater security cooperation; humanitarian assistance; peacekeeping operations and showing the flag -- all within the constraints of fiscal responsibility, industrial capacity, and national infrastructure.¹

Unfortunately, for this strategy to succeed, our citizen-sailors must become adept contortionists—just to fulfill their new Reservists role under these circumstances. Indeed, the first-order effects of transforming to an operational reserve are daunting. But, second- and third-order effects should be taken into account for any course of action to determine the implications for the overall success of the mission. So too should a strategy be analyzed for its overall soundness, practicality, and long-term viability. A standard practical assessment that can be applied to analyze strategies is known as a "FAS" assessment, which considers the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability of the strategy. This assessment enables strategists to holistically evaluate the plan and ensure that it comprehensively attains the desired ends with available means in an acceptable way. The following analysis concludes that an "operational Reserve" for the Navy fails the FAS test. Indeed other services may begin jumping board this transformational ship when the imperative communiqué should be clear: "Abandon ship!" We must avoid embracing a solution that seemingly satisfies the conditions and requirements

temporarily. We must find one that assures a proper balance between the active and reserve components, one that will stand the test of time. To do that, a strategy must be demonstrably feasible, acceptable, and suitable. Then it should be properly structured and resourced.

Background—a Historical Overview of the Navy Reserve

As with all U.S. National Guard soldiers and reservists, the Navy Reserve lineage can be traced back to a militia. Navy Reservists began serving in the late 17th century: On 12 June 1775, the first citizen-sailors of Machias, Maine, commandeered the schooner Unity, set sail, and soundly defeated the British warship HMS Margaretta in a heroic battle.² On 13 October of that same year, the Continental Congress established a small naval force. But a majority of the citizen-sailors continued serving under the flag of privateers with a “Letter of Marque” in hand. They formed a lethal flotilla and wreaked further havoc on the British merchant fleet until the end of the Revolutionary War. As it seems with the conclusion of any war—then came a drawdown. The citizen-sailors returned to their homeports and rejoined their own states’ Militia or established their own organizations. The Navy, however, underwent a complete stand-down as of July 1785, when their last naval ship was sold. The newly formed United States would not resurrect a Navy for another nine years. Throughout the 1800s, the citizen-sailors of the country, time and time again, would return to the seas and Great Lakes to augment the regular Navy: They bore arms and supported the force during times of emergency, crisis, or war.

However, it was not until 17 May 1888 that the citizen-sailors were able to “man the rails” under an officially recognized state naval militia. The Massachusetts Yacht Club launched this naval initiative by introducing a bill into their state legislature which called for the establishment of a naval battalion of the Massachusetts’s volunteer militia.³ This was a fruitful initiative, since 16 other states would follow suit over the next decade to form their own naval militias. When the United States declared war on Spain on 25 April 1898, the all-volunteer Navy welcomed an infusion of seagoing manpower from these naval militias. However, the Navy found that it could not exercise any command authority over state naval militias, since each were under their specific state Governor’s control. This was quickly redressed by Congress with the passage of “emergency legislation on 26 May 1898, creating the U.S. Auxiliary Naval Force, to be composed of volunteers, and with the Governors’ approval members and entire units from state naval militias.”⁴

The success of states naval militias, along with their interoperability with the Navy over the next 12 years, led to the establishment of the “Office of Naval Militia” within the Department of the Navy. The Congress took one further action to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of

the states' naval militias by passing of the "Naval Militia Act" of 1914, which also created the "Division of Naval Militia Affairs" that same year.⁵

As U.S. entry into World War I loomed on the horizon, Congress passed the "Naval Reserve Act," as signed by President Wilson on 29 August 1916. This legislation authorized the Navy to formally establish the United States Naval Reserve force along with a second organization—the National Naval Volunteers.⁶ This second organization provided a method for the naval militiamen to laterally transfer to the newly formed Naval Reserve, since direct affiliation required prior U.S. Naval service. This open passageway not only served as a good corridor for recruits but also ensured federal control over all of those sailors. Thereafter, the regular Navy would not have to rely on the states' naval militias for augmentation throughout the entire war.

The Congress took one final action for the states' naval militias as the war was coming to an end, but this Congressional action was not constructive. Congress repealed all federal laws pertaining to both the states' naval militias and the National Naval Volunteers organization.⁷ With no crisis, war, or federal funding, the states then began deactivating their naval militias. Many governors were quick to mention that the state naval militias had a very short life span of only 30 years, but they were wrong. In New York: "The New York Naval Militia is the only active, federally-recognized Naval Militia with continuous, unbroken service to the country and state for more than a century and a history stretching back to the Revolution."⁸ Additionally, some states reactivated their naval militias once again during WW II and utilized them as armory administrators, instructors, and auxiliary coastal troops.⁹ Currently, four states have naval militias.

Over the course of the three decades following WW I, the U.S. Navy would take part in three actions—one of them would be another World War. The U.S. Naval Reserve participated in the war, and all of its members not in a deferred status reported to active duty by July 1941. Within the next four years, the Navy would grow from a force of around 161 thousand to just under 3.4 million members. The vast majority of these wartime recruits were labeled as reservists.¹⁰ At the end of the war, the Navy would draw down to some 385,000 personnel and retain a Reserve force of around 100,000 personnel.

After WW II, the Department of Defense (DoD) was created and the Navy saw twelve different major employments over the next three decades, but only two of them would include the Naval Reserve: Korea and Vietnam. Even though President Truman declared only a partial mobilization, most members of Naval Reserve force remaining after WW II were reactivated for the Korean War. The same statute authorizing a partial mobilization was used in the Vietnam

War, but considerably fewer Naval Reservists were activated—a very small contingent of aviators and mobile construction battalions. In these two limited wars, a steady flow of conscripts enabled the DoD to fight with mostly active duty personnel and to pick and choose only certain reserve units, elements, and/or personnel for call up.¹¹ However, these two wars also revealed that fighting and winning are two different things.

After the Vietnam War and the inevitable drawdown—actually a mass exodus—two significant events began to unfold within the DoD. The first and most significant ushered in a new era with a mandate to return to all-volunteer forces. The second was a strategic plan to piece together a formidable force structure during a drawdown and conversion to an all-volunteer force. The defense budget plummeted. The Army solution came from General Abrams, who restructured the Army into a “Total Force.” This strategic mix of a smaller active force, coupled with reserve units, put unprecedented reliance on the reserve components. With their lower peacetime sustaining costs—the reserves helped shore up an overall force structure that would still be capable of deterrence. The Total Force was funded within the fiscal constraints of a smaller peacetime budget. All the other services followed suit, smartly aligning their force structures in accordance with what became the new DoD doctrine.

Then the Berlin Wall fell. Overnight the world was realigned into a “new world order”. So too was the DoD reordered. However, winning the first major conflict since Vietnam in Operation Desert Storm would be all consuming for the services. Formulation of new strategies was put on hold. The presidential race would further push this timeline until March of 1993, when then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin initiated a Bottom-Up Review. The Bottom-Up Review was intended to be a “comprehensive review of the nation’s defense strategy, force structure, modernization, infrastructure, and foundations.”¹² What the Bottom-Up Review did was establish that use of the “Total Force” was no longer just for times of emergency, crisis, or war. For the reserves, this meant a requirement for an operational role in times of peace. All of this set the conditions for an evolution of the old strategy: Mission areas would be shifted; the entire force would be downsized; the cost of national security would be reduced and peace dividends would be realized.

This newly evolved “Total Force” strategy by the DoD was dubbed “compensating leverage; that is, our military leaders are looking for smart, mission-effective ways to leverage the Guard and reserves to help compensate for a smaller active force while maintaining a robust defense capability and controlling peacetime costs.”¹³ Once again, the nation’s security would depend considerably on its military reserve force:

In the political environment existing today, budgets are austere, the structure of all services has been reduced, programs are being cut, and further changes for the military are in progress. The shrinking defense budget has been a powerful catalyst for Congress and the military to take a close look at the possible savings that may be achieved through increased use of the Reserve Component. The possibility of increased reliance on the Reserve may be unpopular with some in the Active duty military.¹⁴

The Navy was able to drift ahead of the other services with this DoD transformation, primarily because “peacetime operations of flying, steaming, and operating take much the same actions, manpower, and effort as wartime operations. This is just the reality of seagoing service.”¹⁵ This gave rise in the 1990s to such buzzwords as: “fleet support,” “contributory man-days,” “contributory support,” and “seamless integration.” Seamless integration signifies that the transition of a Reservist or reserve unit into an active component takes place with no discernable difference in capability or performance. And “fleet support,” “contributory support,” together with “contributory man-days,” were just by-products that attempted to capture and quantify how much the Navy Reserve was operationally leaning towards the Navy. Simply put, this set the course for the reserves to become the active component’s partial solution to the mandate of “doing more, with less.”

As the 21st century and aftermath of 9/11 began to unfold, the DoD transformation towards this new “Total Force” gained momentum. “Fully” replaced “seamless” as modifiers for active-reserve integration. To fully comprehend this transformation and fully integrate, the Navy initiated the second bottom-up review within a decade, except this time it would be called a Reserve Zero-Based Review. The Navy’s stated rationale for the Zero-Based Review: “It became imperative to restructure and reintegrate the Navy’s Reserve into the Navy—to create a properly aligned and integrated total force designed to provide the capabilities outlined in ‘Sea Power 21’ and to support the Fleet Response Plan.”¹⁶ The Reserve Zero-Based Review not only reaffirmed the “Total Force” strategy from the Bottom-Up Review, it exploited the underlying premise and restructured the foundation of the Navy Reserve to facilitate leaning further towards a more operational role. Although, as the following Congressional testimony indicates, the Navy may have been more focused on using its reservists to take care of business rather than to devise a new strategy:

Since 1990, the Active Duty services have grown languorous from a diet of contributory assistance, recall, and mobilization support. The number of contributory man-days has risen from 1 million in the late 1980’s to nearly 13 million a year over the past few years. Rather than confront budget appropriators; the Active Components have been content to fill their force shortfalls with Reserve manpower.¹⁷

On the surface, it seems that the Navy is beginning to gain long awaited efficiencies from the reserves. The current Commander of the Navy Reserve not only ostensibly agrees but also offers his expectations for the future role of a Navy's Reservist in stating that, "as a nation we can no longer afford to have separate and unequal forces. We can't have what we used to call 'weekend warriors.' The average reservist now doesn't do weekends. The average reservist now supports what I call supportive commands whenever they can."¹⁸ Herein lies what I believe to be the elemental strategic flaw—this strategy obscures the difference between a "traditional Reserves" and this newly defined "average Reservists." Before elaborating on this, it may be useful to cover some basic fundamentals and nuances regarding the reserve forces.

Some Navy Reserve Fundamentals

The Fundamental Role—Understanding the Mission

As required by Title 10, the Navy Reserve's mission is to provide mission-capable units and qualified individuals to the Navy to support the full range of operations from peace to war.

The Fundamental Types—Understanding the Different Categories of Reservists

The Navy Reserve Force consists of three Reserve Component Categories: Ready, Standby, and Retired Reserves.¹⁹ All three are pretty much what their titles imply when it comes to their level of commitment, training, and expectations for being mobilized.

The "Ready Reserve" component includes the bulk of the reservists who would be mobilized as required. When most people use the generic term "the reserves," they have in mind the "Ready Reserves." Among this component there are two categories of personnel: Selected Reserve (SELRES) and Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).²⁰ Technically, SELRES are sub-categorized under two major roles: Drilling Reservists and Full Time Support (FTS). The Drilling Reservists—who commonly retain the overall title of SELRES—best represent the "weekend warrior" ethos. They are the Navy's primary source of reserve manpower. They maintain an active status (which is different from being on active duty) by being held to annual training requirements, held liable for an immediate mobilization, and held to a minimum service obligation. For this, they are normally paid for all drills and are eligible for any incentives for recruitment, participation, and/or retention. Their minimum annual training requirements consist of approximately 39 days—one weekend a month, travel days, and 12-14 days for annual training. FTS personnel are active duty personnel who are primarily responsible for the training and administration of the Navy Reserve Force program. Prior to 2004, these personnel were known as Training and Administration of Reserves (TAR).

IRR personnel are a part of the mobilization potential, but represent those reservists with limiting factors that prevent them from fully participating as SELRES. Or they are prior active component personnel finishing up the remainder of their commitment. They are usually not paid for drilling but can volunteer to serve and receive pay if enough funding is available. Even though their annual training requirement consists only of one day to update any information and/or satisfy any screening requirement, they remain liable for preparedness for involuntary active duty to fulfill mobilization requirements.

The “Standby Reserve” component consists of Active and Inactive status.²¹ Neither status requires any annual training requirements. Active status is granted by request and is set aside for individuals seeking a transitory reprieve from potential mobilization in the Ready Reserves because of a temporary personal hardship or disability. Likewise, individuals designated as key employees in their civilian career may qualify for active status in the Standby Reserves. Inactive status granted to those that have completed their service obligations and who desire to retain a military affiliation. They remain open to the possibility of being mobilized in the future. Also individuals who are being administratively held while being processed out of the service are designated as inactive. Overall, this component provides a manpower pool of pre-trained individuals who can be involuntary mobilized. However, they are mobilized only after it has been determined that there are insufficient numbers of qualified members in the Ready Reserve to do the job.

The “Retired Reserve” is truly as the name implies.²² It consists of personnel who have completed their active duty and/or Reserve service obligation; they are either drawing some form of retirement benefits or will be—once they are eligible at age 60. The Navy still retains reach-back authority and can order retired members back on active duty either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Navy Reservists are assigned their status to assure that the most capable personnel are most eligible for mobilization. Over half of the force is in the Ready Reserves. At the end of 2005, the Navy reserve manpower was listed as 140,831 for the Ready Reserve—62,766 SELRES, 13,707 FTS, and 64,358 IRR personnel. The Standby Reserve numbered 4,038 and Retired Reserve numbered 117,093. The Total Naval Reserve force numbered approximately 261,962 men and women.²³ Combined with the active component, that would make the Navy’s Total Strategic Force some 620,000 strong.

The Fundamental Structure—Understanding How the Navy Reserve Is Structured

The Navy Reserve consists of surface and air forces—headcounts are split about 80 percent and 20 percent, respectively. All SELRES within these forces are assigned to specific mobilization billets and structured into mission-capable units. The vast majority of the units fall into three categories: augment units, commissioned units, and special-purpose units. Augment units typically support and belong to an existing active-duty command: a ship, Navy base, or regional commander. These augmentees form a collective pool that the Navy can draw from as required. Commissioned units are a military command unto themselves; they usually own, maintain, and operate their own hardware.

By definition, there is one other element within the SELRES membership—Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs). Individual Mobilization Augmentees are assigned only to validated Reserve billets that are identified on active component structure documents primarily to support contingency operations or pre- or post-mobilization requirements. As of 2003, only 168 of these billets have been requested in the budget. All other reserve personnel are neither structured nor assigned to billets.

The Fundamentals of Employment—Understanding How to Gain Access to Reservists

The Department of the Defense is authorized to increase operational manpower from the reserves through three primary mobilization statutes. The first and most extensive is a “Full Mobilization”. Congress must declare war or a national emergency in order to mobilize all reserve components for the duration, plus six months. Next is a “Partial Mobilization” that can be authorized solely by the President’s declaration of a national emergency. It provides access to up to one million “Ready-Reserves” for up to two years. The final and most restrictive is a “Presidential Reserve Call-up.” This requires only a justification and authorizes calling to active duty a total of 200,000 “Ready-Reserves” for up to 270 days. This, however, comes with the caveat that no more than 30,000 of the 200,000 can be IRR personnel.

Two lesser statutes can be utilized to call up small numbers of reservists to active duty. The first allows the Service Secretaries to exercise a 15-day call-up, which basically amounts to directing when and/or where their SELRES will perform their annual training. There are current attempts to increase this up to 29 days. The last and least complicated is strictly volunteerism. All this takes is a willing reservist, a job (validated billet), and enough funding. Formerly, when a volunteer served more than 179 consecutive days, they were included in the active duty end strength, but the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act repealed this requirement.

The Fundamental Principle—Understanding the Nature of the Reservist

“There are lots of culture problems in the Navy, about attitudes toward reservists.”²⁴ To many they are seen as whimsically enjoying the best of all possible worlds outside the structure of active duty. But that is far from true and a patently unfair characterization. Drilling Reservists—“traditional Reservists”—are the nation’s time-honored “weekend warrior.” They not only already “know the ropes” but also bring with them a wide-ranging variety of additional experience: working as airline pilot, teacher, carpenter, computer systems operator, law enforcement officer, firefighter, doctor, and businessman, just to name a few. The “traditional Reservist” serves within a very demanding framework of a rotational triad—family, civilian career, and military career. Justifiably so, their primary career and family remains at the top, with the highest priorities two-thirds of the time. It is both elementary and intuitive—in order to properly balance this triad—that a node of the lowest priority moves upward only when and if it is convenient for the individual.

Mobilization may seem to satisfy the convenience factor, but in reality it only compounds it. Most would argue, rightfully so, that there is no convenient time to compel a person to take a leave of absence from their primary career and family. Nevertheless, the Navy has promulgated a new and clear “message for the reservists is that they need to be prepared to mobilize one or more times during a career—or consider finding a different part-time job.” In fact, the current proposed baseline calls for one mobilization—up to 12 months for every five years of service. Paradoxically, this same second career and “part-time job” in the Army Reserve with an equivalent “5-year training cycle increases unit annual training requirements from 14 days in the first and second years to 21 days in year three and 29 days in year four.”²⁵ To meet these new operational commitments, plus all the other training, readiness, and any emergent requirements, doesn’t quite seem to market itself as being either a part-time job or as being too convenient. Especially, when taking into account additional strategic commitments such as emergencies, crises, and protracted wars. The “traditional Reservist” is silently being squeezed out, forced to evolve into an “average Reservist” due in part, as Lt Gen Hemly puts it, “faced with this, the most likely ‘volunteers’ are those who often enjoy less responsible positions in civilian life.”²⁶ Perhaps, the term “career Reservist” best describes this next generation of Reservists.

Feasibility, Acceptability, and Suitability (FAS) Analysis of Current Strategy

Ends, Ways, and Means

The end to this strategy clearly equates to one Navy, in which an “operational Navy Reserve” is a permanent essential component. So reserve-component units are considered

part of the pool of forces that the military expects to use for the foreseeable future.²⁷ The strategic means thus comes from the actual pool of what the Commander of the Navy Reserve identifies as “average Reservists.”

Feasibility (Are There Appropriate Means to Execute the Ways?)

It has taken a Bottom-Up Review, Reserve Zero-Based Review, an Active-Reserve Integration initiative, and a total of some 17 years to fully and seamlessly integrate the reserves into the active component to the extent of creating an “operational Navy Reserve”. Research into this new operational Navy Reserve force structure surprisingly reveals that as the necessity for reservists to complement the day-to-day missions has dramatically increased over the past decade, the size of the force in the “Ready-Reserves” has decreased by over 54%.

Additionally, all reserve commissioned units have gone the same direction—the Navy Air Reserve has decommissioned 54% of its squadrons, while the surface side cast off most of their commissioned units in the 1990s. The surface reserve does retain the last remaining frigates, mine countermeasures, and mine hunter ships in the inventory—in name only. Funding support for the Navy Reserve has also been proportionately reduced as well. Yes, the Navy and the Navy Reserve are leaner, flexible, and more agile. Above all else, we have a fully integrated Total Force on one hand. On the other hand, others are beginning to see this new 21st century Total Force very differently. As Conn Hallinan, a political analyst for Foreign Policy, bluntly observes:

The U.S. military looks increasingly like a temp agency on steroids: a massive organization of part-time workers armed with the latest in firepower. Reserves have always been an important component of the U.S. military, but they are only supposed to be called up in times of national emergency. From World War I to Gulf War I—75 years—they were called up nine times. In the past 12 years they have been mobilized 10 times.²⁸

In reality, the Navy has been gradually condensing their reserve force down into an individual augmentation pool while touting aspirations that the end state be neither Active nor Reserve—but one Navy. This is readily apparent in the statistics and observations cited above. Consider also the Navy Reserve Force Commander’s recent explanation of the impetus behind this shift towards an augmentation structured force: “Commanders are more likely to ask for smaller numbers of sailors...meaning the reserve center’s primary purpose is to provide administrative and logistical support, not to prepare a unit to deploy as a group.”²⁹ The Navy has been there before now, “an augmentee structure within the Naval Reserve was attempted in the 1950's/1960's, and again in the 1980's. In one word: Failure!”³⁰ Eventually, it all comes

down to the inability of the “traditional Reservists” to balance their triad because it is naturally balanced only through part-time military service, with vary infrequent calls to active duty.

Yet this condensing of the Navy Reserve continues: “Part-time Reservists are being turned into full-time soldiers and airmen through extended and unpredictable active duty assignments.”³¹ The undertone is that the reserve components are readily available to be placed voluntarily on active duty in support of daily operations or utilized as a surge capacity to conduct operational missions whenever and wherever there are not enough trained and ready units or individuals in the active component. Facile use of the reserves is fostered by leaders making comments such as “the key step in achieving active-reserve integration is to determine what the active component really needs its reserve component to do and when the reserve component needs to do it.”³² Reservists are pressured even further when they are told that maintaining readiness is not an “occasional thing, but a constant thing.”³³

To give this strategy some semblance of feasibility, the operational balance—at least—has to be restored to a level that will not hurt long-term participation, recruiting, and/or retention goals. These second-order effects are not only looming, they are abundantly clear. The Navy Reserve came in last in 2004 with the worse recruitment numbers (87%) and would have gotten the honor again in 2005 (88%), except it was undercut by another sister Reserve service. Additionally, the Navy Reserve’s attrition rates are some of the highest, steadily on the rise since 2004, and of great concern. To make matters worse, force structure reductions each year are dramatically skewing these numbers through lessening recruitment goals and concealing actual attritions rates.³⁴

The third-order effects are yet more astounding. To offset the above, much funding will be expended in providing recruitment and retention incentives. For all Guard and Reservists, the absolute worse possible effect is beginning to surface. Some civilian employers are no longer looking to hire reservists. It seems they too have priorities to balance and fiduciary responsibility to their company and stockholders comes first.³⁵

Acceptability (Are the Ways Supportable, Worth the Cost, and Ethical?)

Sustainability is the key element in an acceptable strategy. Very basically, “You have to remember that if you call up a reserve unit, it costs just as much as an active unit. The difference is you haven’t budgeted for it.”³⁶ Any activity or item that isn’t budgeted for within DoD is usually not very sustainable. That reality will not change in the very near future.

Additionally, an “operational Reserve” is not cost effective. Supporters of the reserves have always claimed that the Navy Reserve consumes only three percent of the Navy’s budget,

yet comprises nearly 20 percent of the force structure. After examining the 2007 personnel budget estimates—the statistical reality is that the Ready Reserves occupy about 17.3 percent of the Total force structure and consume about 7.4 percent of the personnel budget.³⁷ This still sounds impressive, but they neglect to caveat that the 17.3 percent consists of ready-reserves, 50 percent of whom are IRR members that cost nothing. Plus, the remaining half consists of 80 percent SELRES that serve 39 days. When comparing actual reserve bodies to active duty bodies—nine SELRES (actually 9.35) at 39 days to one active duty person at 365 days—it works out that the reserve's occupy only about 3.9 percent of the day-to-day force but cost 7.4 percent of the budget to maintain. This makes more sense, given SELRES on average—being more senior—cost more per year than their active duty counterpart.

Worse yet, the direct cost of maintaining an operational reserve would not merely equate one reservist with an active sailor. Given the limitations, drilling structures, and being very lenient on productivity, the absolute minimum would be a ratio of five SELRES to every one active sailor. This is based on one active duty sailor averaging roughly 180 productive days annually, taking into account annual leave, weekends, and holidays. Therefore, to get the same production period in an operational Reserve environment would take five SELRES at 36 days to achieve 180 days. However, to get the equal amount of productive days, the Navy would have to pay out 315 days of pay because SELRES get paid double for 24 of their 39 days. Then there is the “what if” factor: What if you need a 181st production day? This costs nothing for an active sailor since they are already paid for 24/7/365 days per year. For an operational Reserve, the Navy is paying more per operational day and also incurring more in the future through retirement pay because every drill worked today by a reservist accumulates more retirement points for the reservist down the road. In the end, an argument can be made that a strategic Reserve is cost effective, but the cost for an operational Reserve is virtually cost prohibitive.

Another issue that deals somewhat with costs pertains to mobilizations, which have proven to be costly for Presidents, both monetarily and politically. Mobilizations provide the second reason that an operational Reserve will fail this portion of the FAS assessment. There is an intrinsic tendency to misuse SELRES through a phenomenon known as “volunteer extortion,” especially for contingencies that are either small or anticipated to last for only short periods. And this phenomenon will only intensify as the political costs of mobilizations skyrocket in the future. The hardest part about recognizing volunteer extortion is the distinction; it can be as minuscule as a minute or as absurd as up to a year. The later of which, I was privy too first hand, ran rapid through the entire mobilization processes, and was well documented towards

the end of the first year of mobilizations. As Paul Connors points out below from his recent article, different extortion methods were and are occurring DoD wide:

Meanwhile the threatening comments—"If you don't volunteer for at least 45 days, that means that you'll be mobilized for a year if you wait for call-up"—need to stop. Threatening individual Guardsmen and reservists is a shoddy way to provide manpower to accomplish a mission away from home, loved ones and civilian careers.³⁸

Volunteer extortion is not just a crime against the reservists. It extends over onto the other two elements of a reservist's triad because the family and employer do not understand the term "volunteering" when it isn't applied to them but directly impacts them. Or, as Lt Gen Hemly phases it, "requirements to use other than involuntary mobilization authorities places the burden of responsibility for service on the Soldiers' back..., the Soldier is seen as having a clear choice by his family and employer."³⁹

Suitability (Will the Means and Ways Achieve the Desired Ends?)

The Reserve Officer Association has identified most of the same issues regarding feasibility and acceptability. It is very vocal on the consequences of reservists being turned into full-time soldiers. Their prior president and current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs is also worried. He clearly states that "the purpose of the reserve components has changed....They are an operational reserve that supports day to day defense requirements."⁴⁰ Yet, none of their solutions are going to solve the problem; they merely attempt to provide better incentives to mask the underlying problems and attempt to overcome the second- and third-order effects, as shown here:

The debate is about whether the Reserve Components are becoming too expensive and pricing themselves "out-of-the-market." Maintaining medical readiness, family medical considerations, and updating retired pay eligibility criteria are now important to our citizen warriors. Reservists fully understand their duty and are proud to be serving. However, many in the National Guard and Reserve are weighing the factors that affect remaining in the military. They want change and they deserve change. And, yes, some of these needed changes do cost money.⁴¹

Increasing costs associated with utilizing reservists just makes them less and less suitable in an operational world. In an executive summary for the President, the National Security Advisory Group also looked into the overall strategy. They too provided no other insight then to timidly suggest that the train has already left the station. They do offer a warning of the impending train wreck:

The reality is that the operational reserve model is here to stay. Demand for U.S. military forces is likely to remain high (even if not as high as today) and budget,

demographic and recruiting realities will preclude a major expansion of the active duty military in the near term. But this new reality is not reflected in how reserve forces are being organized, trained, equipped, and funded.⁴²

A Possible Solution

A Total Strategic Reserve Force

Restore the Navy's Reserve force and make it feasible, acceptable, and suitable again by returning to a "strategic Reserve" strategy. Create an environment that eliminates all residual barriers—structural and cultural—for effective integration within the Total Force. To achieve this, we don't need to "reinvent any wheels"—just reengineer and redirect them by beginning with retransforming "the means" by completely eliminating the SELRES element and directing that the Ready-Reserve force consist exclusively of IRR participants. This Ready Reserve force would be completely accessible—in war and at peace—but impermeable to volunteer extortion or blackmail. It would cost virtually nothing. To maintain greater sustainability, mandate minimum service obligations to include at least a three year minimal transitional period in the IRR.

Next, overhaul this Navy Reserve to make it efficient and cost-effective. Make pay and benefits the same for active and reserve personnel, with reserve pay and benefits prorated based on active-duty days served.⁴³ This could easily be achieved through simplification of duty statuses. The complexity and the number of the different types of duty statuses reservists can serve under are incredible. Currently, DODINST 1215.19 delineates some 25 different statuses for reservists under orders. Why not just two: Voluntary or Involuntary Active Duty. Mobilization would only encompass an involuntary active duty status.

But, don't stop there. Since the IRR does not have an authorized strength level, its end-strength could permit a limitless manpower pool of all of these "average Reservists" and could really facilitate development of a continuum of service options—allowing an individual reservist to volunteer to serve on active duty from a month to nearly full time based on the needs of the AC command supported.⁴⁴ By fully exploiting advanced modern information technologies, a virtual private network could be established to administer and manage the entire RC population. Provide them with real-time accessibility to muster, update information, and perform maintenance of administrative records, including updating their medical status online. In addition, provide a systematic and contiguous network to advertise, select, and assign volunteering IRR members as individual augmenters directly to active duty units—a virtual "Military.Monster.com." Compensating and leveraging the reserves in this manner would truly

enhance the overall effectiveness of the Total Force by efficiently using a part-time force to overcome the shortfalls of a smaller full-time force.

However, there is one thing that has to be overhauled: the mobilization process. One of the key differences between operational and strategic RC is the ordering of the three elements: train, mobilize, and fight. It is paramount for both strategies to have a streamlined and efficient mobilization process, but more so for a strategic reserve—given mobilization comes first. This should never happen:

The mobilization of the Naval Reserve for the ongoing war against terrorism continues a very old story of bureaucratic bungling and mismanagement. Although naval mobilization was thoroughly disastrous in Operation Desert Storm, and many studies, revisions and plans were generated after the 1991 war to ensure future success, so far it has been the same incompetence as usual.”⁴⁵

Support a Naval National Guard or State Naval Militia

The citizen-sailors of thirteen state Naval Militias formed the original Naval Reserve in the late 19th century. Afterwards, they took to the high seas to defend the homeland by projecting our strength and taking the fight onto the enemy's shores. Right now may be the time to allow some of those viable assets to transfer back home—such as “traditional Reservists”—where their states, cities, and neighborhoods can reclaim them. “That will not only build a safer America, but an America truer to its values. Because as we redirect our defenses to our homeland, we will reconnect hundreds of thousands of citizen soldiers to the proud mission of protecting the land in which they and their families live.”⁴⁶ Especially now, in light of new homeland security initiatives, there is renewed interest in state militias. Consider J. J. Canfano vision:

The emerging potential for maritime threats and low-altitude attacks, as well as the utility of maritime forces in responding to many catastrophic disasters also augurs the need for an organizational structure that better utilizes the Navy's capacity to support homeland security. Several states with maritime interests already have state naval militias. In fact, the New York Naval Militia assisted in the response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Creating a Navy Guard to include all coastal states would offer several advantages. A Navy Guard would provide coastal states with more resources to address their state maritime security and public safety requirements. Unlike the Coast Guard, the Navy Guard would focus on state needs when not on active federal service. It would also provide an organization within the National Guard and the Navy that treats homeland security missions as an inherent responsibility and would work to develop the requisite competencies and capabilities to fully support these tasks. Finally, a Navy Guard would provide a suitable partner for the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure seamless integration of daily the Defense and Homeland Security departments' maritime operations.⁴⁷

There is no a better way to capture the “traditional” Reservists’ and provide them with the capabilities to rebalance their triad then by increasing their convenience, accessibility, and above all else, their reach ability for their part-time job. There is no a better way to add to the Navy reserve end-strength, since Guard and Militia members would create another residual pool for the Navy to draw from, as clearly stated in the memorandum from the New Your State Naval Militia to Navy Reserve noting that “the federal government has first rights to the services of naval and Marine reservist in the militia.”⁴⁸ There is not a better way to implement the concept of a continuum of service or to naturally disperse “jointness”.

Conclusion

The Navy's leaders are scrambling to resolve its future. Last June, Adm. Michael G. Mullen, the chief of naval operations, announced plans to draft by mid-2007 a national maritime strategy that would plot the mission and scope of the 21st-century Navy, providing policy makers with a beacon to guide them in planning the size and makeup of the fleet.⁴⁹

Many Americans can still recall the picture showing a military truck in the desert, with a hand-lettered sign in the windshield that read, "One weekend a month, my ass!" Recalling the statement—certainly, an amusing and clever way to proclaim their plight—is not nearly as important as the subliminal messages that are created. The first is by both the truck and its surroundings. It is that the rationale for an expensive Navy is becoming less apparent to the public because one thing the American public can visualize about the recent conflicts is that they have all been decidedly ground wars. The second is for whom the sign is written. The American public and businesses not only empathize with and respect, but also champion the ideals of the “traditional Reservists”—once again—answering the Nation's call to duty. I do not believe the same admiration will be granted to the so-called “average Reservists.”

We find ourselves at a unique time in history when incredible opportunity and substantial risk are converging. It is imperative for us to be prepared to face them head on with a well thought out strategy for transformation. This may be the last chance, at least for a while, to stop this runaway train and save the Navy, Navy Reserve, and one of the nations greatest asset—the “traditional Reservists”.

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